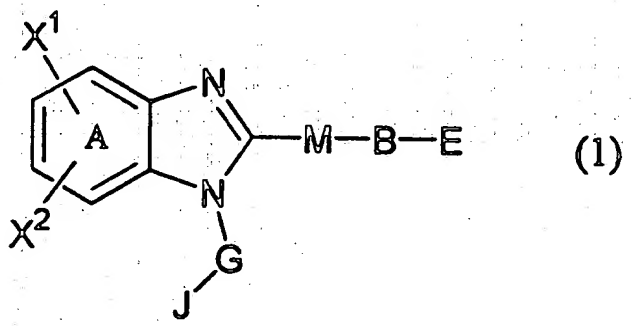
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-21. (Canceled)

22. (previously presented): A method of inhibiting human chymase activity to treat or prevent a bone/cartilage metabolic disease in human beings, said method comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of a benzimidazole derivative expressed by the



(1)

following formula (1) or its pharmaceutically permissible salt,

[in the formula (1), the ring marked with A expresses a benzene ring;

X^1 and X^2 are each at the same time or independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a trihalomethyl group, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, $-CH_2NH_2$, $-CH=NR^1$, $-CH=NOR^1$ or $-CONR^1R^2$ (here, R^1 and R^2 are each a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), $-COOR^3$ (here, R^3 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{3-7} cycloalkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched

alkylsulfonyl group or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfinyl group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, an acyl group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms, and the substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s)};

B is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkylene group or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{2-6} normal or branched alkenylene group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group (including the case where adjacent two groups form an acetal bonding), a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched acyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched acylamino group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms, and the substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s) of the alkylene group or an alkenylene group; between atoms, the alkylene group or alkenylene group optionally contains one or more of -O-, -S-, $-SO_2-$ or $-NR^4-$, but this atom or atomic group does not bond directly to the M, and here R^4 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkyl group};

E expresses $-COOR^4$;

G is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylene group {between atoms, the alkylene group optionally contains one or more of -O-, -S-, $-SO_2-$ or $-NR^4-$, but this atom or atomic group does not bond directly to the nitrogen atom of the imidazole ring (R^4 is similarly defined as above), and the substituent is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group (including the case where

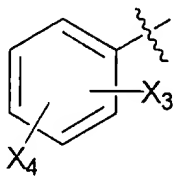
adjacent two groups form an acetal bonding), a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group or an oxo group};

J is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{4-10} aryl group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, -$COOR^7$ (here, R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), a C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group (including the case where adjacent two groups form an acetal bonding), a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfinyl group, a C_{1-6} acyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched acylamino group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group, or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms; the substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s) of the aryl group; and the substituent is further optionally substituted with a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, an acyl group, a trihalomethyl group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with a halogen atom}; and

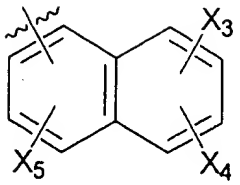
M is a sulfur atom, a sulfinyl group, or a sulfonyl group].

23. (previously presented): The method set forth in Claim 22 wherein X^1 and X^2 in the above formula (1) are each at the same time or independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a trihalomethyl group, a cyano group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkoxyl group, or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkylthio group.

24. (previously presented): The method set forth in Claim 22 wherein J in formula (1) is a group described in the following formula (2) or (3),



(2)



(3)

[here, X^3, X^4 and X^5 are each at the same time or independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, -$COOR^7$ (here, R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkoxyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkylthio group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group, or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkylsulfinyl group; there is no limitation regarding the substitution positions of X^3, X^4 and X^5 on the benzene ring or the naphthalene ring].

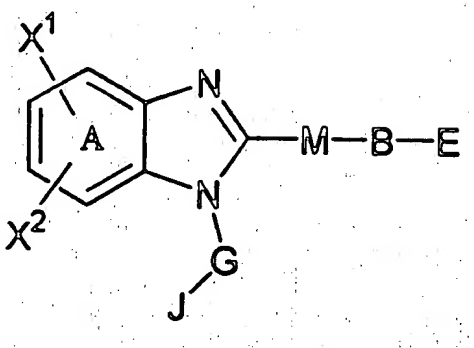
25. (previously presented): The method set forth in Claim 22 wherein M is a sulfur atom.

26. (previously presented): The method set forth in Claim 22 wherein B is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkylene group.

27. (currently amended): The method set forth in Claim 22 wherein G is -CH_2-, -CH_2CH_2-, -CH_2CO-, -CH_2CH_2O-, -CH_2CONH-, -CO-, ~~-SO_2-~~, -CH_2SO_2-, -CH_2S- or -CH_2CH_2S- (J bonds to the right side of said group).

28. (previously presented): The method set forth in Claim 22 wherein E is -COOH.

29. (previously presented): A benzimidazole derivative expressed by the following formula (1) or its pharmaceutically permissible salt,



(1)

[in the formula (1), the ring marked with A expresses a benzene ring;

X^1 and X^2 are each at the same time or independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a trihalomethyl group, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, $-CH_2NH_2$, $-CH=NR^1$, $-CH=NOR^1$ or $-CONR^1R^2$ (here, R^1 and R^2 are each a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), $-COOR^3$ (here, R^3 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{3-7} cycloalkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfinyl group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, an acyl group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms, and the substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s)};

B is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkylene group or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{2-6} normal or branched alkenylene group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group (including the case where adjacent two groups form an acetal bonding), a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched

alkylsulfonyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched acyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched acylamino group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms, and the substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s) of the alkylene group or an alkenylene group; between atoms, the alkylene group or alkenylene group optionally contains one or more of -O-, -S- or $-SO_2-$, but this atom or atomic group does not bond directly to the M, and here R^4 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkyl group};

E expresses $-COOR^4$;

G is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylene group {between atoms, the alkylene group optionally contains one or more of -O-, -S-, $-SO_2-$ or $-NR^4-$, but this atom or atomic group does not bond directly to the nitrogen atom of the imidazole ring (R^4 is similarly defined as above), and the substituent is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group (including the case where adjacent two groups form an acetal bonding), a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group or an oxo group};

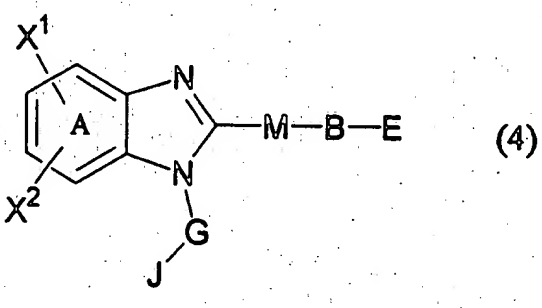
J is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{4-10} aryl group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, $-COOR^7$ (here, R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), a C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group (including the case where adjacent two groups form an acetal bonding), a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfinyl group, a C_{1-6} acyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched acylamino group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group, or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms; the

substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s) of the aryl group; and the substituent is further optionally substituted with a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, an acyl group, a trihalomethyl group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with a halogen atom}; and

M is a sulfinyl group, or a sulfonyl group].

30. (previously presented): The benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in Claim 29 wherein X^1 and X^2 in the above formula (1) are each at the same time or independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a trihalomethyl group, a cyano group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkoxyl group, or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkylthio group.

31. (currently amended): A benzimidazole derivative expressed by the following formula (4) or its pharmaceutically permissible salt,



(4)

[in the formula (4), the ring marked with A expresses a benzene ring;

X^1 and X^2 are each at the same time or independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a trihalomethyl group, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, $-CH_2NH_2$, $-CH=NR^1$, $-CH=NOR^1$ or $-CONR^1R^2$ (here, R^1 and R^2 are each a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), $-COOR^3$ (here, R^3 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6}

normal, cyclic or branched alkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{3-7} cycloalkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfinyl group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, an acyl group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms, and the substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s)};

B is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkylene group or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{2-6} normal or branched alkenylene group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group (including the case where adjacent two groups form an acetal bonding), a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched acyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched acylamino group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms, and the substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s) of the alkylene group or an alkenylene group; between atoms, the alkylene group or alkenylene group optionally contains one or more of -O-, -S- or $-SO_2-$, but this atom or atomic group does not bond directly to the M, and here R^4 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkyl group};

E expresses $-COOR^4$;

G is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylene group {between atoms, the alkylene group optionally contains one or more of -O-, -S-, $-SO_2-$ or $-NR^4-$, but this

atom or atomic group does not bond directly to the nitrogen atom of the imidazole ring (R^4 is similarly defined as above), and the substituent is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group (including the case where adjacent two groups form an acetal bonding), a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group or an oxo group};

J is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{4-10} aryl group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, -$COOR^7$ (here, R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), a C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group (including the case where adjacent two groups form an acetal bonding), a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfinyl group, a C_{1-6} acyl group, a C_{1-6} normal or branched acylamino group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group, or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms; the substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s) of the aryl group; and the substituent is further optionally substituted with a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, an acyl group, a trihalomethyl group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with a halogen ~~atom);~~ atom}; and

M is a sulfur atom, a sulfinyl group, or sulfonyl group;

provided that ~~the case is excluded where at least one of~~ when X^1 and X^2 ~~is a~~ are each a group other than a cyano group, -CH_2NH_2, -$CH{=}NR^1$, -$CH{=}NOR^1$ or -$CONR^1R^2$ (here, R^1 and R^2 are each a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), ~~and~~ J ~~expresses only~~ is a substituted naphthalene ring.

32. (previously presented): A benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in Claim 29 or 31 wherein X^1 and X^2 are each a hydrogen atom, a cyano group, $-CH_2NH_2$, $-CH=NR^1$, $-CH=NOR^1$ or $-CONR^1R^2$ (here, R^1 and R^2 are each a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group; X^1 and X^2 are not hydrogen at the same time).

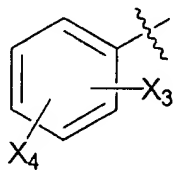
33. (previously presented): A benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in Claim 29 or 31 wherein X^1 and X^2 are each at the same time or independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a trihalomethyl group, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, $-COOR^3$ (here, R^3 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkoxyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylthio group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal or branched alkylsulfinyl group {the substituent permissible to the groups is a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, an acyl group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, a phenyl group, an oxo group or a phenoxy group optionally substituted with one or more halogen atoms, and the substituent may substitute singly or plurally independently at arbitrary position(s)}.

34. (previously presented): A benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in Claim 29 or 31 wherein X^1 and X^2 are each a hydrogen atom or a cyano group (here, X^1 and X^2 can not be hydrogen atoms at the same time).

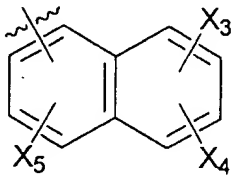
35. (previously presented): A benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in Claim 31 wherein M is a sulfur atom.

36. (previously presented): A benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in Claim 29 or 31 wherein B is a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-6} normal, cyclic or branched alkylene group.

37. (previously presented): A benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in Claim 29 or 31 wherein J is a group expressed by the following formula (2) or (3),



(2)



(3)

[here, X^3, X^4 and X^5 are each at the same time or independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitro group, a cyano group, a trihalomethyl group, a trihalomethoxy group, $-COOR^7$ (here, R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4} alkyl group), a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkoxyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkylthio group, a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkylsulfonyl group, or a substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-3} normal or branched alkylsulfinyl group; there is no limitation regarding the substitution positions of X^3, X^4 and X^5 on the benzene ring or the naphthalene ring].

38. (currently amended): A benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in Claim 29 or 31 wherein G is $-CH_2-$, $-CH_2CH_2-$, $-CH_2CO-$, $-CH_2CH_2O-$, $-CH_2CONH-$, $-CO-$, ~~$-SO_2-$~~, $-CH_2SO_2-$, $-CH_2S-$ or $-CH_2CH_2S-$ (J bonds to the right side of said group).

39. (previously presented): A benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in Claim 29 or 31 wherein E is -COOH.

40. (previously presented): A pharmaceutical composition consisting of a benzimidazole derivative and/or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in any one of Claims 29, 30 or 31, and a pharmaceutically permissible carrier.

41. (currently amended): A method of preventing or treating an inflammatory disease, an allergy disease, a respiratory disease, a cardiovascular disease or a bone/cartilage metabolic disease, said method comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of a ~~A~~ benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt set forth in any one of Claims 29, 30 or 31 ~~to prevent or treat an inflammatory disease, an allergy disease, a respiratory disease, a cardiovascular disease or a bone/cartilage metabolic disease~~.

42. (currently amended): ~~A benzimidazole derivative or its pharmaceutically permissible salt~~ The method set forth in Claim 41 to prevent or treat a disease in human beings.